

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8612

S E C R E T BUCHAREST 1896

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS 2 & 3
TAGS: TSPA ACOM RO
SUBJECT: VIP TELECOMMUNICATION SYSTEM

REF: STATE 074286

1. SCIATT INFORMED GEN. ZGAVARDICI AND COSTESCU AFTERNOON MARCH 23 THAT AFTER CAREFUL CONSIDERATION DECISION TAKEN AT HIGH LEVEL THAT USG NOT PREPARED TO AUTHORIZE SALE OF SECOND AIRBORNE TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM FOR INSTALLATION IN IL-62 AND THAT DECISION WOULD BE COMMUNICATED TO E-SYSTEMS MARCH 24. IN MAKING DEMARCHE, SCIATT STRESSED THAT USG PLEASED TO GO FORWARD WITH ORIGINAL COMMITMENT FOR ONE PACKAGE TO BE INSTALLED IN 707, HOWEVER, THIS COMMITMENT DID NOT ENCOMPASS A SECOND PACKAGE FOR INSTALLATION IN IL-62.

2. ZGAVARDICI REACTED TO NEWS BY STATING THAT HE HAD MADE A MISTAKE IN NOT DISCUSSING IL-62 PACKAGE WITH EMBASSY AND DAS GANLEY BEFORE PRESENTING PROPOSAL TO E-SYSTEMS. HOWEVER, HE SAID THAT HE DID NOT THINK SECOND PACKAGE WOULD BE PROBLEM EVEN THOUGH IT TO BE INSTALLED IN IL-62. ACCORDING ZGAVARDICI GOR MADE DECISION TO PURCHASE MODERNIZED VERSION IL-62 FOR DELIVERY IN 1979 AFTER DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN ABOUT 707 PURCHASE AND NEGOTIATIONS UNDERWAY FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM. HE EXPLAINED THAT PRESIDENT CEAUSESCU ALWAYS
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PREFERRED TO USE 707 FOR HIS TRIPS, HOWEVER, NEW IL-62 WILL BE USED AS STANDBY AIRCRAFT AND THEREFORE IT LOGICAL THAT IT SHOULD HAVE SAME COMMUNICATIONS CAPACITY AS PRESIDENTIAL 707. HE ASSURED SCIATT THAT SYSTEM WOULD BE INSTALLED IN IL-62 IN BUCHAREST BY US AND ROMANIAN TECHNICIANS AND THAT SOVIET TECHNICIANS WOULD NOT COME NEAR THE PLANE. IN THE EVENT THAT IT SHOULD BE SENT TO THE USSR FOR OVERHAUL, THE COMMUNICATIONS

EQUIPMENT WOULD BE REMOVED. WHEN ASKED, ZGAVARDICI ADMITTED THAT THERE WERE SOVIET TECHNICIANS AT OTOPENI BUT THAT THEY WERE LIMITED TO TAROM OPERATIONS AND DID NOT WORK ON PRESIDENTIAL AIRCRAFT. IN FACT, HE SAID THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO OBTAIN PRESIDENT CEAUSESCU'S APPROVAL TO PERMIT COLLINS AND E-SYSTEMS REPRESENTATIVES TO LOOK AT THE AIRCRAFT. ZGAVARDICI STATED THAT IF USG CONCERNED ABOUT SECURITY ASPECT OF COMMUNICATIONS PACKAGE, A SPECIAL CLAUSE COULD BE PLACED IN THE CONTRACT TO COVER THIS. HE ASKED THAT THIS BE COVEYED TO WASHINGTON.

3. SCIATT INFORMED ZGAVARDICI THAT HE DID NOT KNOW REASONS BEHIND DENIAL BUT THAT IT WAS FIRM. HE AGREED TO REPORT SUBSTANCE OF CONVERSATION. ZGARVARDICI SAID THAT HE WOULD DELAY INFORMING THE PRESIDENT FOR ONE WEEK AND WOULD DISCUSS PROBLEM WITH E-SYSTEMS TEAM SCHEDULED ARRIVE BUCHAREST MARCH 27. SCIATT REITERATED THAT THERE WAS NO REALISTIC EXPECTATION THAT DECISION WOULD BE REVERSED.

4. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION BY SCIATT IF NEGATIVE DECISION ON SECOND PACKAGE WOULD CHANGE GOR PLANS TO PROCEED WITH ORIGINAL COMMITMENT, ZGARDICI RESPONDED THAT IT WOULD NOT. AGGREY

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